

full assistance in this important undertaking and, in doing so, better themselves and the overall economy of Maryland.

The twenty-three counties and Baltimore City have benefited greatly by the revisions and expansions of the programs of health and welfare which have been initiated during the past two and a half years

Some of you who already have adopted your local budgets, and others of you who are in the process of preparing them, know the relief you are enjoying as a result of the new State policy placing a limit equal to 10 cents per \$100 of assessable property on the contributions by the counties and the City of Baltimore to public welfare purposes. In this year's budget, the State has assumed an additional obligation here that amounts to \$2,605,218.

The State has tried to be of assistance to you, too, in the area of local and regional planning. In fact, one of the primary accomplishments of the Department of Planning, reorganized during the first year of my term, has been in alerting local governments to the need of planning at the local level in this fast-moving age. Realizing the gravity of the problem, the Federal Government has made available funds for local planning. It has also provided funds for urban renewal, the eligibility for which depends upon sound planning.

The State Planning Department, in addition to emphasizing the importance of local planning, is administering and supervising local programs in some cases, has obtained approval of Federal grants for planning programs in other areas, has met and discussed programs with local groups in many counties and towns, and is engaged in encouraging the grouping together in regions of communities and counties having common problems and common objectives.

One of the purposes in reorganizing the State Roads Commission in 1959 was to decentralize this agency, and bring its program of secondary road building back to the grass roots. In a program as sensitive and as politically controversial as the construction and maintenance of community roads, it would be foolish to expect 100 per cent satisfaction from all areas. But I do know that the present commission listens to, understands and tries to help local governments with their local highway problems, while coordinating the secondary program with by far the greatest highway-building effort ever undertaken by our State The James Committee program as it is called, and the new taxes to finance it, were adopted as a result of repeated and persistent demands, by you as an organiza-